



Committee on City Services and the Northampton City Council

Committee Members:

Chair: Councilor Maureen T. Carney

Vice-Chair: Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge

Councilor Dennis P. Bidwell

Councilor James Nash

Meeting Minutes

Date: April 2, 2018, 4 p.m.

Location: City Council Chambers

212 Main St., Northampton, Massachusetts

Present: Councilor Maureen T. Carney, Chair
Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge, Vice Chair
Councilor Dennis P. Bidwell
Councilor James Nash

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

At 4 p.m., Councilor Carney called the meeting to order. On a roll call, Councilors Bidwell, Carney, LaBarge and Nash were present.

2. DISCUSSION WITH CITIZEN GROUP - NUCLEARBAN.US

Local representatives of the citizen group Nuclearban.us were present to seek councilors' support for bringing Northampton into compliance with the United Nations Treaty to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. Council President Ryan O'Donnell referred the group to the City Services Committee for further direction after being contacted for assistance with this goal.

Susan Lantz was in attendance, accompanied by the Reverend Peter Kakos and Doug Renick.

In November of 2017, Councilors Alisa Klein and William H. Dwight sponsored a resolution to ban nuclear weapons, Ms. Lantz reminded. Nuclearban.us members want to take this commitment further by having Northampton become compliant with the UN Treaty to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. They asked Councilor O'Donnell how best to go about this, and he referred them to the City Services Committee for additional discussion.

122 countries have adopted the UN Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons, although the United States and eight other countries with nuclear-weapon capability have not adopted it, Ms. Lantz reported. A requirement for becoming treaty-compliant is that the city or town not purchase products or services or invest in any of the 26 companies that make parts for nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons themselves, she explained.

Councilor Carney informed her of the 'Open Checkbook' database on the city website that allows users to search by vendor, Ms. Lantz related. A search of 'Open Check-book' turned up a \$225 purchase from a subsidiary of Honeywell International. The group's next step is to find out about investments, she said.

The UN Treaty to Ban Nuclear weapons is actively supported by many countries outside of the United States, Ms. Lantz indicated. The thought is that if people in the United States can show the rest of the world that no matter what their government may do, the people are in favor of the treaty, it would help other countries come along and adopt the nuclear ban.

When 50 countries ratify this treaty it becomes international law, she asserted.

Members offered comments and suggestions, including looking at the city audit and talking to Finance Director Susan Wright, who is responsible for investments. Councilor Carney expressed her understanding that the city is only allowed to invest in somewhat restrictive investment instruments, such as short-term bonds and mutual funds.

The city pension fund is under different management, it was noted. With regard to the pension fund, she did confirm that there are no mutual funds at all and was assured that there are no gun manufacturers, Lantz advised.

Mutual funds present a more complicated issue Ms. Lantz acknowledged. In order to be treaty-compliant, the group asks that the city comply to the extent it has control. If Northampton cannot be completely compliant because of investment in a mutual fund, the city can write a letter requesting that the fund no longer invest in the objectionable company. After that, it can be declared treaty-compliant. Communities that have become treaty compliant will be listed on the group's website.

The ultimate step would be for the city to pass an ordinance that would be legally binding to not do business with companies involved in nuclear weapons.

Ms. Lantz said she sent an e-mail to Councilors Klein and Dwight to see if they would be willing to appoint a citizen's group to look into the city's investments and contracts. Councilor Klein explained that the city has a procedure for appointing a committee and that the group has to be sponsored, etc. It seemed like it was going to take a lot of time. Ms. Lantz expressed her understanding that any councilor can sponsor a committee.

Councilors confirmed that members have their blessing to approach the Mayor's office for more information.

They are happy that four more councilors are now better informed, Ms. Lantz concluded.

Councilor Bidwell asked what the effect would be on nuclear-armed nations if 50 countries ratify the UN treaty.

The practical effect is that a non-compliant country becomes a rogue nation, and people shy away from that, Mr. Renick responded. The hope is that if they ban nuclear weapons as a world, other

nations will follow suit. The more nations that sign on, the more pressure is put on the eight that have civilizations within a finger's reach, Mr. Kakos suggested.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes of March 5, 2018 was tabled until the next meeting since they had not yet been transcribed.

4. ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

A. 18.057 Appointment to Northampton Housing Authority - referred by City Council 03/01/2018

Marilyn Richards, 20 Bridge Rd., Unit 8, Florence

Term: March 2018-June 2023

(Replacing expired term of Lynne Wallace)

After Ms. Richards got over her illness, she became very involved in city government and is very interested to become part of the Housing Authority, Councilor LaBarge reported. She said she could imagine how difficult it is to oversee, direct and manage, and that she would bring years of oversight experience to the agency. As part of the team, she said she would advocate for open communication and transparency. She looks forward to putting in the time and effort to understand the needs of the organization and its residents.

Councilor LaBarge moved to forward the appointment with a positive recommendation.

Councilor Nash seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0.

B. 18.071 Appointments to Disability Commission and Planning Board (Associate & Full Member) - referred by City Council 3/15/2018

Disability Commission

Emma Cornwell, 35 Holyoke Street, Northampton, MA 01060

Term: March 2018 - June 2019

(To replace the unexpired term of Ruth McGrath)

Planning Board

Janna White, 18 Hancock Street, Northampton, MA 01060

Term: March 2018 - June 2019

(As Associate Member to replace the unexpired term of Euripedes de Oliveira)

Euripedes de Oliveira, 9 Washington Place, Northampton, MA 01060

Term: March 2018 - June 2019

(As a Full Member to fill the unexpired term of Ann Dewitt Brooks)

Emma Cornwell applied for appointment in July, but there were no vacancies at the time, Councilor LaBarge related. She has been very dedicated, coming to meetings. She works at Smith College and has a disability and wants to have a hand in making Northampton more accessible to people with disabilities. People with disabilities deserve safe access to all Northampton has to offer, whether it be to businesses or safer sidewalks. She has been trying to navigate the sidewalks in her wheelchair for too long and is fed up. She is tired of just complaining and wants to have an active role in making things better for her community.

Ms. Cornwell believes safer streets and better access will be better for every resident of Northampton and not just wheelchair users, Councilor LaBarge continued. She would like to see the committee begin to address access issues on a larger scale. It doesn't matter if an event or venue is accessible if people with disabilities can't get there without assistance, she pointed out.

Councilor LaBarge expressed the opinion that she will be a great asset to the Disability Commission and positively recommended her appointment. Councilor Bidwell seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0.

Councilor Nash said he did not speak with **Janna White**, who is seeking an associate position on the Planning Board. The appointment will be on the consent agenda Thursday, so the council could vote with no recommendation, it was noted. After brief discussion, **Councilor Bidwell moved to forward the appointment with a positive recommendation. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0.**

Euripedes de Oliveira has extensive experience in academia and the practical world and is already an associate member, Councilor Bidwell shared. He brings a lot of international perspective, is a big proponent of regional planning and likes to think he brings a more regional perspective. He has done a lot of work in participatory planning and brings a lot of experience and skill sets to the Planning Board.

Councilor Bidwell moved to forward the appointment with a positive recommendation. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0.

5. New Business

None

6. Adjourn

Upon motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

Prepared By:

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